

Letter

TO

JAMES BUNTER, Esq.

ON

RELIGIOUS TRACTS,

AND

THE IGNORANCE

OF THE

English and Irish Roman Catholicicks.



BY THE REV. R. T.



SECOND EDITION.

Taunton :

PRINTED BY J. W. MARRIOTT, AT THE TAUNTON COURIER OFFICE.

1824.

Ignorance 22.

Miller

JAMES BUNTER, Esq.

OF THE BAR OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

AND

THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL

WASHINGTON, D. C.

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

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PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.



THE reception, which this Pamphlet has experienced, and the applications from various parts of the kingdom have rendered a Second Edition necessary. This the writer undertakes with the more pleasure, as it affords the opportunity of paying a tribute of acknowledgment to Mr. BUNTER, and the gentlemen connected with him on the Committee, for the spirit of truly Christian toleration, with which they have attended to the appeal made to them in defence of the Catholicks of this Town. Their conduct reflects honor on them, as men and Christians, and proves, that the opinion the writer had formed of their liberal feelings was well founded. The truth of this will appear more evident from the letter of Mr. BUNTER, which, for that reason, with his per-

mission, is inserted here.* It will afford pleasure to every friend of genuine Christianity,

Taunton, 22d. January, 1824.

* Rev. Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your pamphlet, and to thank you for the polite note which accompanied it.

You do me only justice by believing that I sincerely disapprove of whatever is calculated to beget amongst any of my fellow creatures illiberal and unkind feelings; if, therefore, any of the Tracts, circulated by the Society of which I am a member, have this tendency, I deeply regret it: and as you have specified three numbers which you consider to be of this character, I shall with great pleasure call the attention of the Committee to the subject. I may add, that I am quite sure they will pay the most ready attention to your complaint.

I sincerely lament that any man should suffer for religious opinions conscientiously entertained; and I deem it to be unjust to withhold from the Catholics, or any other class of Dissenters, any of those civil immunities which, though confined to the Members of the Establishment, are the common property of all. I am bound, however, in candour to add, that I found this opinion upon *that right of private judgment* to which I believe every man entitled, and which it is every man's duty to exercise: every man is hereafter to give an account for *himself* at the bar of God, and I hold him to be accountable to God only, for the conclusions to which an honest judgment has led him.

Sincerely hoping that whatever difference of opinion may subsist between us on this or any other point of doctrine, we shall both cherish the genuine spirit of Christianity, and live and die under its benign influence, I subscribe myself,

Rev. Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

JAMES BUNTER.

To the Rev. R. Towers, &c. &c.

* In regard of the term *private judgment*; if by it be understood *reason*, or the faculty which God has given us as rational beings to be our guide through life, every Catholic will agree with Mr. BUNTER. No Catholic admits of any authority whatsoever as empowered to check the fullest exercise of his reason, or impose on him a religious creed in opposition to sound sense. I hope to shew in a few weeks in a future dissertation on Bible Societies, and on the conduct of the Catholic Church respecting the present system, that the Catholics proceed on more rational grounds, and more conformably to the Word of God, than their opponents.—R. TOWERS.

the more so, when it is known, that the promises it contains were not made in vain; for, till within some months, the Catholicks of this town were pestered on every side with Tracts of the most injurious tendency to their feelings and their interests: consisting of fabricated stories, reflections, and bold assertions, contrary to truth as well as justice; but which were in general so artfully concealed amongst other subjects of an innocent or even edifying nature, as to escape the vigilance of the best disposd distributor of Tracts, who would spurn at the idea of being an accomplice in this trade of calumny. That the gentlemen of the Committee did not designedly lend their aid to it, appears from the activity with which these disgraceful publications were banished, as soon as the state of the case was brought before them. To their friendly interference it is owing, that the Catholicks have been delivered from these insults; it being evident that without their exertions a change of this kind could not be introduced. The Catholicks are sensible of this, and rejoice at the growing spirit of toleration. They rejoice moreover at the good breeding and temperance that universally prevails at the public meetings called for religious pur-

poses. There, the Catholick may attend, with the full assurance, that neither his feelings will be wounded, nor his reason insulted. The same spirit pervades the public institutions of the town. This picture must be particularly gratifying to every Catholick, and ought to be held up, as a motive of confusion to the many meetings and towns of these kingdoms which have of late been distinguished by scenes of bigotry and brutality.

The Earl of RODEN, who has been so miraculously converted, and his associates, at the Twentieth Anniversary Meeting of the Bible Society, held in Birmingham, on the 7th of June,—the Protestant Union in London, nick-named of St. Saviour, who spit fire and brimstone at every thing bearing the name of Catholick,—the Vandals of Northampton, who, on the 16th ult. broke into the premises on which a Catholic Chapel is erecting, and for a second time demolished the materials,—the fanaticks of Huddersfield, who, when no proprietor of ground would accommodate the Catholicks with a small spot for a place of worship, insulted the God of universal charity, by pretended songs of thanksgiving in all their meetings for this triumph over the spirit of the Gospel.—These, and many more of the

same stamp, may gnash their teeth and foam with rage, when they hear that there is one Protestant town at least, where the Catholics can erect their temple unmolested, where they can cherish the religion of their forefathers, hear the ancient faith again explained to themselves and their children, openly declare themselves members of the Holy Catholic Church, without the danger of seeing their Altars overturned, or themselves or their Pastors exposed to public insult. If any confirmation were wanting to this statement, nothing more could be required than the report of the last year's Committee read at the Annual Meeting of the Tract Society, held on the 11th inst. in this town, which, in language as beautiful as the sentiments were charitable, proclaimed to the world their abhorrence of whatever might be calculated to injure the feelings, or degrade the religious sentiments of any denomination of Christians, and their disposition to concur in removing every thing of that description from amongst the lower classes, and to substitute lessons of pure morality in its place. This proves that the empire of reason and brotherly affection is again resuming its authority over the minds of men, in spite of bigotry and blind hatred ;

and that, if the Catholics are unanimous and active in their own cause, and never give up the contest or lay down the pen, till all their brethren are enlightened on the subject of their real tenets, and till every prejudice be done away with, TRUTH must and will triumph over obstinacy and delusion. When their Protestant fellow-subjects shall have thus learnt to regard the Catholics in colors, less odious, than those, in which they have been so industriously painted by ignorant or malicious parents, nurses, and teachers, their hearts will relent; they will blush at past injustices, and extend towards their innocent and oppressed countrymen some share of that justice and charity, which they exert in such full measure in favor of the Negro of Africa, and the Slaves of the Western World.

TAUNTON LODGE, 14th Oct. 1824.

A LETTER, &c.

TAUNTON, Nov. 5th, 1823.

SIR,

HAVING had the pleasure of attending at the Meeting of the Tract Society, held on the 20th ult., on which occasion you received the flattering, but merited distinction of being unanimously called to fill the chair,—a distinction which, though my vote could be of small weight in the scale, met with my warmest approbation, I could not on that occasion but listen with pleasure to the various discourses, that breathed a spirit of universal benevolence, entirely divested of that acrimony which, under the specious name of religious zeal, so frequently disgraces meetings of this nature. Moved by this consideration, and encouraged by the known liberality of your mind, I presume to suggest to you, as chairman of that respectable meeting, some cursory reflections on the subject of Tract Societies in general, and on the manner in which they are conducted in this neighbourhood, which, if they meet not with your unqualified approbation, will be received at least with candour and indulgence.

As to the utility of Tract Societies, when under the influence of a truly gospel spirit, there can exist but one sentiment amongst Christians or philanthropists. A combination of efforts thus directed to one point forms a powerful machine, whose operations can only be circumscribed by the limits of the globe, and must be hailed as the messenger of glad tidings, and as the truest friend of mankind, when it is founded on the basis of that charity recommended by St. Paul, 1 Cor. c. xiii. when he says—"Charity is patient, is kind, envieth not, dealeth not perversely, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth." When such institutions repose on foundations of this kind, vice and ignorance must fly dismayed before them, and virtue and truth be again restored to honour among mankind. It is in their power to extend their salutary influence to the extremities of the human race, and convey instruction into retreats inaccessible to the living voice of a teacher. Their effects, though silent, are not the less powerful or efficacious, but are like the fruitful stream, which, though it flow concealed from public view, ceases not in its steady course to give life to, and nourish the wholesome herbs and flowers that flourish on its banks. The advantages arising from associations animated by the spirit of pure charity, that rejoiceth in truth, need not the ornaments of speech to procure them the approbation of the well-designing part of mankind.

The good or evil effects that may be produced on the opinions or conduct of men by the diffusion of small Tracts, adapted to the capacity of the ignorant, can only be duly estimated by such as have made them the subject of peculiar attention. The power thus brought into action by instruments seemingly so insignificant, is beyond the calculation of man. We may apply to these combinations what the famous Archimedes affirmed of his mechanical science:—"Give me a spot on which to place my machines, and I will move the world." This is well known to the CARLISLES of the present day, and was not unknown to the infidels of the last century, who by means of small Tracts totally revolutionized the ideas and character of a whole nation; tore from their breasts the attachment to the religion of their ancestors and their race of kings, for which, till that period, they had been distinguished before every other nation. Through the influence of small Tracts were the French led to trample on the laws of God and man, to overturn the altar and the throne, and to carry destruction into every quarter of the globe, threatening to bury all the sacred institutions, all the present comforts and future prospects of civil society in one common wreck.

I have indulged in these reflections in order to shew, that combinations formed for the purpose of influencing the opinions of men, by the circulation of small Tracts, may promote the best as well as the worst of purposes;—that according to the spirit that animates them, they may either shower

down manna in the wilderness, or overspread the land with locusts, carrying desolation whithersoever they direct their baleful flight. It is by their spirit we are to determine, whether such combinations claim our gratitude, or call for our detestation. These extremes, however, lie at an immense distance from each other, and seldom or never do mankind arrive at either of them. For, as whatever is established by the ingenuity of man, however perfect in itself, must partake of the weakness and imperfections of its author; so no plan, however wicked, but is accompanied by some ingredient of good. From the preponderancy of the one or the other in the systems introduced by mankind we are induced either to admit or reject their application.

This brings me nearer to the subject to which I could wish to draw your attention, and on which I must appeal to your liberality. The language held by the gentlemen at the meeting of the 20th ult. seemed to be the genuine dictates of hearts overflowing with universal good will, which in my mind, I hailed as the dawn of a new era, that after the long period of bloodshed, hatred, and persecution amongst Christians, would sooth every discord into peace, and unite every professor of the Christian name in one common bond of charity, or at least of friendly forbearance. The Tract Society was stiled by one gentleman a Catholick Association, a term, which always strikes our ears with a pleasing sensation, like that of the sweetest music, comprising in itself every thing that

is dear to us as Christians. I will give credit to those gentlemen, that their hearts were in perfect unison with their declarations, and that they entertained no other wish, but that of disseminating the purest doctrines and lessons of the gospel, and that, if any thing contrary to those principles has insinuated itself amongst the tracts, it is foreign from their intention to circulate or sanction any publication, that deviates from the line of truth, honor, or liberality. Under this conviction therefore, and as a part of the duty I owe to those, who look up to me for instruction, I presume to suggest to you, and through your kind mediation to the other members of the society, that, notwithstanding their liberal intentions, certain tracts do circulate under their name, in direct opposition to their publick declarations, in direct opposition to the charity required by St. Paul, which rejoiceth in truth, and tending to foment hatred and persecution, and to destroy the reputation of the greatest part of the Christian world. You will easily perceive, that I allude to the tracts that abound with unmerited and unfounded accusations against the Ministers and other Members, as well as the doctrines of the Catholick Church. I am aware that your employments afford you but little leisure to peruse the various tracts that come into circulation; however, you need only to cast a cursory view over some few of them, to convince yourself, that tracts of this disgraceful nature are carried from house to house. I will only mention a few to shew the truth of my assertion. *The history of Mary, a living*

character, marked No. 141,—of *Andrew Dunn an Irish Catholick*: which histories turn upon the following invented facts. A poor ignorant Catholick bred up in all the superstitions of popery, *which allows him to indulge in every crime, provided he only observes some external ceremonies*, the meaning of which he does not understand, falls in by chance with a distributor of bibles, or meets with one by some accident. This being a book perfectly new to him, he opens it with pious greediness, and to his great surprize meets with the *name of Christ*, and *pardon for the chief of sinners*, and the *only refuge for lost sinners in the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ*: to which he was of course a total stranger before. He continues his pious lecture, and soon discovers that all the doctrines of popery are condemned by the word of God, which his Priest had for that reason so carefully kept out of sight. The Spirit of the Lord then descends upon him, and fills him so brimful of learning that nothing now can resist the Spirit that speaks within him; away he hies to the priest that has hitherto kept him in profound darkness, *to attack the strong holds of Popery with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*. The new divine now hurls so many learned arguments at the head of the poor priest, or even bishop, that they stand astounded and abashed, and being unable to answer one of the many learned objections, after some frivolous common-place arguments, conclude with falling into a passion, and quitting the obstinate heretic, having first carefully consigned him

over to the devil, for his impudence in being able to puzzle his teachers. In a Tract published at Silver-Street Chapel, No. 162, page 5, 6, we find an account of a *poor Roman Catholick, named Neale*, who having passed through the above-mentioned process of illumination, and willing to play the *hypocrite* no longer in seeming to profess publicly what his heart did not approve of, goes to inform the priest of his resolution, and to state to him, that, having been particularly moved by a passage read to him out of a pious Tract, viz. :—

“Ho! every one that thirsteth (he was probably fond of a drop of the dear creature that made him so alive to this text,) come ye to the waters,” he had for some time seen the errors of the Church of Rome, and was resolved to leave her communion. But how does he convey these his sentiments to the Priest? Why, no doubt by laying before him the motives that induced him to change his religion, and shewing them to be founded on the word of God. Oh, no, he adopts a better method than that round-about way of doing business, which must make it appear as plain as a man’s nose on his face, that all the errors of Popery are erroneous and contrary to the truth of God’s word. Behold the method! This plain-dealing, good soul, approaches hypocrite-like the tribunal of penance, and confesses his sins, but when the Priest is going to absolve him without making any demand whatever for the same, behold the sincere penitent stops him to say that he has no more than a shilling;—the usual tax, says the pious Tract, being half a crown for the forgive-

ness of sins. A person of common understanding might ask why the man did not admit of the absolution, and then inform the priest of his inability to buy what was already given? It must be observed that the whole transaction took place in Ireland, where bulls, or absurdities of this kind are supposed to be the order of the day, and these Tract-makers think it necessary to keep up the spirit of the thing. The priest, of course, finding that the man had not wherewith to pay for what he was going to give for nothing, falls into a passion, and notwithstanding all the representations of the poor man that he had only one shilling, his earnings being ten pence a day for the support of a wife and six children, absolutely refuses the absolution without the fee, and the man goes to seek grace where it may be had *without money and without price*. The absurdity of this fabrication needs no comment. I must moreover observe that it is a law in our church, well known even to our enemies, that whatever priest should demand even the most trifling retribution for the absolution, would be declared guilty of the crime of simony,—be suspended from every office,—and be rendered incapable of every spiritual function through life. If these facts can be proved against any priest that *really does exist*, I will promise to procure his deposition. But the authors of these calumnies, conscious of their own guilt, will not so easily quit their lurking holes. The works of darkness love not the light. These Tracts, however, are of the mildest kind. I could produce others which seem to have

been penned in Billingsgate, and to be the language of the ladies of those regions, so famed for eloquence, under the powerful influence of the spirit—extracted from the gin-bottle. Add to these the calumnies contained in every line of Fox's book of Martyrs, which is on the point of appearing in a new edition, under the form of small tracts, with the avowed intention of inflaming the minds of the ignorant with horror and detestation of the innocent victims of his forgeries.

These and the like productions are assiduously put into the hands of the lower class of my congregation, accompanied in general with implications of the most revolting nature against the wickedness of the priests and blindness of the people, who thus allow themselves to be led blindfold into hell. Now, I appeal to your feelings of honor and justice, whether libels of this nature, without one proof to support them,—without a single clue by which either to detect the inventor of them, or discover the place where these disgraceful scenes are feigned to have occurred, should be allowed to creep forth, and under the name of Religious Tracts, spread poison on their way. Yet I require not that they be totally suppressed—this might seem to insinuate our fear of them; no, the only demand I make, and which every candid mind will consider a just one, is, that these stories come forward with the author's name, or at least attested by such facts, and such circumstances of time and place, as may enable us to investigate the truth, and confute the calumny where it exists, or to wipe away the stain

from our Church by concurring with them in exposing such excesses to the detestation of the world, and in bringing such wicked priests to condign punishment. By this method we should at least be placed on an equal footing with the criminal at the bar, and more we require not, of being confronted with our accusers, and of being allowed to defend our own innocence. Let the authors of the low productions accept this challenge, if they dare; let them appear like generous enemies in open day, and we will meet them. But, if they have not the courage to quit their retreats, let them not at least betray their cowardly spirit by stabbing us in the dark, and leaving us no opportunity of defending ourselves. If there be errors and abuses in the Catholick Church, let them be detected; if the priests disgrace their calling in the exercise of their functions, let them be brought to public shame, and the scandal removed.

But no; truth is not the object these authors are in search of. Their object is, by slander to destroy the reputation of their innocent neighbours, and by this means the more effectually to blast every other comfort of life; in imitation of the serpent, Boa constrictor, which is said to cover its prey with venom, and then devour it. They practice well the proverb—*Throw dirt enough at your enemy, and some will be sure to stick.* They are well aware, that the common people, to whom these slanderous publications are directed, have been brought up in the most profound ignorance of the real doctrines of Catholicks,—that they have imbibed with their mother's milk the utmost abhorrence and

dread of what they are pleased to style the *abominations of Popery*—that whatever comes under the form of abuse of the Roman Catholick religion, be it ever so gross, ever so incredible, is swallowed down with pious credulity as the most undoubted truth ; whilst every attempt to defend the poor Papists, or to detect the absurdity of these stories would be rejected with the utmost disdain. By this means the poison is securely conveyed into their minds, and every avenue closed against the antidote. But why should such unjust measures be resorted to, if plain truth be on the side of our enemies, and our Religion be nothing but a tissue of absurdities and abominations? If this were the case, a fair public discussion in the face of the world would be the surest way of displaying the truth of one party, and detecting the errors of the other. This is what Catholicks call for, but call for in vain. It is well known, that, whilst almost every newspaper, every pamphlet and almanaek will admit with pleasure any attack upon the Catholicks, scarcely a solitary paper will accept of a reply in their defence. You will give me credit, when I affirm, that, if we were inclined to retaliate, the Catholick Church embraces in her bosom men, who in talents, in wit, and learning, are inferior to none of their neighbours, and who from the fertility of their genius are capable, if their consciences were as pliant as their imaginations, of amusing the publick with stories, more entertaining and more credible, than the low productions with which we are assailed. The cause, however, which we de-

fend, is too sacred to be thus played with, and stands too securely on the firm basis of truth to need such auxiliaries. If we were inclined to attack the ministers or the absurd doctrines of other religious persuasions, we need not have recourse to fiction; the sphere of your knowledge, as well as mine, would afford ample subjects for volumes. But our religion bids us cast a veil over the frailties of our fellow-creatures, and tells us, that the conduct of those even, who really sit in the chair of Moses can have no influence on the doctrines delivered by divine authority; and that every system of religion opposed to eternal truth will sink under its own weight. We do not condescend to methods like these in our own vindication. We have the *armour of truth*, at our command, and the *sword of the spirit, which is the word of God*.

You will certainly agree with me, when I say that my duty calls on me to defend that part of the vineyard, committed to my care, against every depredation; which duty I must comply with, unless I wish to be numbered amongst the hirelings, that flee at the sight of the wolf. The request, therefore, which I should wish you to lay before the gentlemen of the Association, is, that they would please to use their efforts towards suppressing every publication hostile to the persons, or religion of Catholicks, in which the conditions above-mentioned are not attended to. I flatter myself that the gentlemen, whose sentiments are so liberal, will not hesitate a moment in acceding to so just a proposal. Should it, however, be beyond the stretch of their power

to prevent these or such like Tracts from poisoning the minds of the ignorant, they must not be surprised if the injured party stand on their own defence; nor charge us with illiberality, if the duty we owe ourselves compels us to send forth other Tracts into the public, which, whilst they display our own innocence, will lay before the world the underhand tricks that are employed with a view of deterring people from examining our doctrine, representing us as objects of detestation, and dividing us from the rest of our fellow-creatures, with whom we are desirous of uniting in affection, like the children of one common parent. It will not, however, be long in the power of any one to hide the truth from the public eye. The spirit of enquiry is gone forth, and men are beginning to use their own senses and their own reason; and I leave it to the judgment of any discerning person, to determine what consequences must necessarily follow from a detection of such calumnies. Men will learn to detest the authors of them, and to mistrust the truth of a cause that calls on the father of lies to its support. They will begin to enquire from what cause it can proceed, that, whilst every other denomination of Christians are allowed to explain their own doctrine, and are believed on their own word, the Catholick Religion alone is learnt from its most inveterate enemies;—and that, notwithstanding our most solemn protestations, we are charged with doctrines which our hearts abhor, and which every page of our books of instructions will refute, and which every child in the Ca-

tholick Church, that has imbibed the first rudiments of religion, can contradict. From considering the causes that produce such strange effects people will be led to reflect, that amongst the various marks which Christ declared should be the distinctive badges of his true followers, the *first* was mutual charity among themselves, and the *second* the unmerited hatred and persecution they should suffer from the world. In St. John, c. 15. 17. he says, "*These things I command you, that you love one another; if the world hate you, know you that it hated me before you; if you had been of the world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember my word that I said to you—the servant is not greater than his Lord: if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my word, they will keep yours also; but all these things they will do to you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.*" If these words are duly weighed, and compared with the treatment the Roman Catholics endure, it must forcibly strike a thinking mind, that whatever may be the other claims of the Roman Catholics to the title of the Church of Christ, this mark of being universally reviled and persecuted cannot be disputed with them. It is a fact too well known to be denied, that amongst the first lessons impressed on the minds of youth, a principal one is a hatred of popery; and that the tender soul, before it has learnt to expand itself in the love of its Creator, is taught to contract into

a hatred of its fellow creatures. The public schools of this as well as of every other town in England, will afford ample evidence of this truth: where our Catholick children are notwithstanding the utmost exertions of the masters assailed on every side with the most insulting taunts on the subject of the Catholick Religion, and that by children which have not themselves learnt the first principles of any Religion whatsoever.* Again, it is a well-known fact that a man may indulge in every reverie on the subject of Religion—nay, he may banish it entirely from his breast, or he may wander from meeting to meeting, tossed by every wind of doctrine, and conclude with renouncing every mode of worship, and yet all go well with him. Some of his religious neighbours may, indeed, cast an eye of pious compassion on his wanderings; yet his friends will cherish him, and his masters will employ him as before. But let him, in search of truth, straggle into a Catholick Chapel, and return thence with fewer prejudices than he entered; the alarm is instantly sounded, and every eye is atten-

* It affords pleasure to be able to record examples of a contrary spirit. The exertions of the Rev. Dr. D. of this town have been attended with such success in this regard, that the Catholick boys are not only freed from every insult on the subject of Religion, but are allowed every facility in the practice of it. This testimony is the result of personal acquaintance with the above-mentioned School, and it is hoped will not be considered as an accusation of any other particular school. The author can indeed testify to the *earnest endeavours* of other teachers to banish every mark of religious persecution from amongst their pupils, but it is not always in their power to enforce the execution of their injunctions.

tive to his motions. Should he be induced to repeat his visits, and discover the least inclination to the religion of his forefathers, behold the world in arms against him!—his friends avoid him as the pest of society. The very man, who was regarded as worthy of the warmest friendship, as a companion; or of the most important trust, as a servant, when he was destitute of religion,—the foundation of whatever is great and good in man, is deemed unworthy of these advantages, from the moment he evinces a desire of following the bias of an honest mind in embracing a religion which, in his judgment, bears the marks of truth, and which teaches him, under the penalty of eternal death, to be inviolably faithful to his God and his neighbours—to fulfil the duties of an affectionate husband, a tender parent, and a dutiful child—to treat all his fellow-creatures with the same tender regard as he could wish for at their hands, and even to confer favours on those who seek his ruin, and in all his actions to seek to please his Father who is in Heaven. No sooner does he wish to practise these virtues in the bosom of the Catholick Church, than from that moment every tie, either cemented by tender friendship or consanguinity, is broken asunder; his friends disappear, and the sweet connexion of father, mother, brother, sister, exist no longer for him. All the softest feelings, implanted by a kind being in the human breast, are extinguished in his regard, and he is cast out, disinherited both from the patrimony and affections of those, the nearest and dearest to his heart.

This is not a picture drawn by the warmth of imagination: no,—it falls much short of the truth, I can produce many living examples to attest the faintness of the coloring. Nay, even in this town examples are not wanting of persons, on whose minds the light of truth has flashed too brightly to be withstood; whose hearts tell them they can only find peace in the Catholick Church, but who in consequence of the many engines that pour down a torrent of ridicule and persecution, and in consequence of the threats held out by those upon whom they and their helpless infants depend for bread, dare not follow the dictates of their own conscience, but are even *now* tortured by the struggle betwixt what they conceive to be their duty to the Almighty, and the sacrifices which a strict adherence to that duty must of necessity call for. How frequently does the case occur in this town, that the lower class of my congregation receive work in the various houses, where they meet with every tenderness, and every art is employed to draw them from their religion; but this plan not succeeding, as it never does, the kindness hitherto expressed turns into fury, and they are instantly expelled the house, pursued by language, which only disappointed malice could suggest. But is this the mild spirit of the Gospel? Are these the persons that draw their Religion from the Bible? What a bad opinion they must entertain of their own cause, when they can find no better weapons to defend it with than such as are a disgrace to civil society!

You may perhaps ask, what connection

all this has with Tract Societies: I answer, a very close connection. For it is by Tracts, of the description I have alluded to, that the minds of men are continually inflamed against us. It is by these that the ignorant are taught to regard us with horror; to believe that we renounce Christ, and the redemption obtained through him,—that we make Gods of men, nay, even of lifeless images,—that we can purchase for a sum of money the permission to perpetrate any crime; in fine, that we are enemies of God, and from thence they are induced to conclude that they are rendering a service to the Almighty in thus persecuting us, and saying every thing that is false of us and of our doctrines. From these Tracts the ignorant are taught to believe that the Roman Catholick Church, conscious of her errors, and fearful lest they should be exposed if the people were allowed to read the Scriptures, has strictly forbidden them to be delivered into the hands of her children; that the priests themselves, especially in Ireland, are ignorant, and only preserve their authority by keeping their flocks still more ignorant than themselves. They are taught to believe that the religion of the Catholicks is one general system of folly, superstition, and abominations, and this being taken for a certain truth, it is considered by many as a crime to peruse our books, which would disabuse them of their erroneous opinions. On this account, therefore, though I may perhaps hereafter be induced to discuss more fully the merits of a variety of Tracts, I shall presume, on the present occasion, to offer some cursory remarks, which may serve to shew how little foun-

dation there is for these accusations against Catholics.

Touching the charge so frequently repeated,—that the Catholics *deny Christ and his merits, and the redemption wrought through him*, one moment's perusal of any of our books on religious subjects, would detect this slander, and discover to every mind not *resolved to resist the most evident proofs*, that the whole fabrick of our faith and hope reposes on Christ alone,—that his passion and merits are the only anchors of our hope,—that in his blood alone we can wash away the stains of sin,—that there is no other name under Heaven in which a man can be saved. The Catholics alone carry their pious veneration so far as to love and esteem every thing that has the most remote connection with their Redeemer. For his sake they revere the cross, in which St. Paul gloried;—for his sake they preserve with respect his image; for his sake they love honour, and esteem his saints, because their virtues are the overflowing of his grace and merits—because the crowns they wear have been purchased with his blood—and because they are his friends, and the tenderest objects of his love. Not a sigh is wafted to the throne of mercy, but must be purified in the blood of the Lamb, before it can find admission there. These are the real doctrines of the Roman Catholics. But then these very proofs of affection to our Divine Redeemer are retorted upon us as the effects of an idolatrous worship. Such are the inconsistencies of men, when they have once quitted the path of truth. On the one hand we are charged with re-

nouncing Christ ; on the other, with carrying our love to a criminal excess.

Another charge so assiduously circulated against the Catholick Church is that of robbing the people of the word of God. Can any crimination be more unjust than this ? If the persons, who thus slander her, were for a moment to reflect, they would soon feel that they are indebted *solely* to the *Roman Catholics*, for *all* the blessings they derive from Scripture. It was to them these sacred books were delivered ; they preserved them with the most religious fidelity, caused them to be translated into every language, and copied by thousands of hands before the invention of printing. Without them not one authentic leaf of the Bible would be extant at this day. The regulations framed by the general Councils, by the Popes and Bishops in every age, shew with what severity they impressed upon the Clergy the necessity of studying the Scriptures, of reading them and expounding them to the people. No church on earth ever inculcated the perusal of the Holy Scriptures with more zeal than the Catholick, when such perusal was not exposed to danger or abuse. But the times have been, when the *indiscriminate reading* and *private interpretation* of the sacred oracles filled all Europe with rebellion and bloodshed. Then it was that the Church, like a tender mother, endeavoured to remove for *a time* from a *certain portion* of her children, the food which, from the diseased state of their constitution, might prove fatal to them. *She* commanded the *ignorant* and *unlearned* to read the Scriptures under the eye and instruction of their pastors,

impressing on them at the same time the doctrine delivered by St. Peter, in his second Epistle, chap. i. v. 20.—“ *Understanding this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation;*” and chap. iii. 16, where, speaking of the Epistle of St. Paul, he says,—“ *In which are some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION;* v. 17. *You, therefore, brethren, knowing these things before, TAKE HEED, lest being led aside by the errors of the unwise, you fall from your own steadfastness.*” Can any one with the least appearance of reason charge the Catholick Church with refusing the Scripture to the people, whilst she is only recommending and enforcing the doctrine of St. Peter, and whilst she is only impressing on them the caution to read the Scriptures with humility and a sincere desire of truth; and as no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation, not to presume to explain according to their own fancy or inclination, the things *hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own damnation;* but in these things to prefer the unanimous interpretation of *God’s universal Church*, before the wild imaginations of every *scullion or stable-boy?* This is the principle on which our Church has acted, but no where does there exist a general law prohibiting the perusal of the Scriptures either in the learned or modern languages. One of the pious tracts indeed, which I have already noticed, presumes to cite an edict of the Council of Trent, which the *honest* author is pleased to stile one of the most stupendous

monuments of human folly or wickedness to be met with in the annals of the world. It is not, however, positively clear from the context, whether this stupendous monument is erected in memory of *his* malicious forgery, or of *his* profound ignorance; the pious reader is at liberty to adopt either side, or both, as the spirit may move him. But here it is:—
“Reader, behold it! All Bibles extant, in the vulgar tongue, are prohibited, with all parts of them, either printed or manuscript, with all summaries and abridgements (altho’ historical) of the Bible, and books of the Holy Scriptures in the vulgar language or tongue.” And then in pious astonishment he cries out, *“Did the members of this celebrated Council read the Scriptures or not?”* I ask in reply, did the author of this celebrated work read the Ten Commandments, when he thus bore false witness against his neighbour? No such edict was ever framed either by this or any other Council, or by any authority whatsoever extending to the whole Catholick Church.* But

* Partial, local, and temporary regulations have at various times been found necessary for the purpose of checking many evils arising out of the licentiousness of men, in dispersing corrupted portions, or books of Scripture in the vulgar tongues, and by their wild interpretation, making the Bible minister to their most extravagant and criminal passions. The policy or impolicy of these regulations must not be judged of according to the opinions, feelings, or state of mankind at the present day, but in conjunction with the events and times that gave birth to them. Every one acquainted with history will remember the horrid scenes that drenched the very cradle of the Reformation in blood and desolation. Witness the plains of Germany, where the wrecks of those convulsions everywhere meet the eye of the traveller, even at this distance of time. Witness the murders, burnings, and havoc, caused by Knox and his followers in Scotland. Witness Cromwell and his crew in England. Witness almost every nation of Europe. (See Milner’s Let-

there are some people very expert in trimming up texts, edicts, &c. in defence of any assertion, already advanced against the Catholics, or which may be hereafter advanced; as skilful cooks will prepare sauces for any kind of meat you please, to be applied according to the palates of the guests.

Notwithstanding all these attempts to deceive mankind, it is a fact placed beyond contradiction, that the Scriptures were preserved by the Catholick Church with the utmost scrupulosity, and every possible care was taken to deliver them uncorrupted into the hands of the faithful; and from her hands did the first Reformers receive them pure and untainted. The Catholics cannot be charged with having corrupted the Scriptures, I wish the same could with truth be affirmed of the first reformers. But it is a well attested fact that they took away and added to the word of God, for the purpose of introducing

ters to a Prebendary.) We shall, on consulting history, generally find that the authors of these inhuman excesses carried the Bible in one hand, as a vindication of their conduct, and the sword in the other, to execute, as they said, the judgments of God on his enemies. Who will presume to condemn the ministers of any Church or Government, that should attempt by wholesome statutes to withdraw the fuel that enkindled so destructive a flame, and should continue them in force till the minds of men, recovered from their phrenzy, might be brought to such a temper as to be capable of reading the sacred oracles without converting them into a deadly poison? Such has been the object of the Catholick Church, in all the restrictions laid on her members. On this principle, therefore, must we judge of the decrees passed against the reading of Scripture, not forgetting the necessities that called them forth. But no where can existence of a decree be shewn, which, independent of times, persons, and circumstances, prohibits the perusal of the Scriptures, nor can any thing of this kind be produced, which ever extended to, or was acted upon, by the whole Catholick Church.

their new doctrines. They disfigured and maimed the Bible, and then put it into the hands of the ignorant, with the direction to search the Scriptures, where they would discover the errors of Popery. This is the case with the Bibles published in the years 1562, 1577, 1579. The nation began, however, at length to be aware of the imposition, and so loud was the general cry for a more faithful translation, that King James the First was at length obliged to command a revision of the Bibles, and to publish a much improved, though not perfectly correct edition in the year 1611, the one now in general use amongst the Protestants.* This improvement could only be effected by comparing them with those delivered down by the Catholick Church.

I must moreover observe, that so far is our church from withholding any part of Scripture from the people, that she alone commu-

* The Protestants in a treatise stiled a petition directed to his most excellent Majesty, King James the First, complain "that our translation of the Psalms, comprised in our book of common prayer, doth in *addition, subtraction, and alteration*, differ from the truth of the Hebrew at least in *two hundred places*, on which account many refuse to use the common prayer book."

The Ministers of Lincoln Diocese signified to the King, that the English translation *takes away from the text, adds to the text*, and that sometimes to the changing or obscuring of the meaning of the Holy Ghost, that it was absurd and senseless, perverting in many places the meaning of the Holy Ghost. Mr. Carlisle, a Protestant Divine, affirms that the English translators have *depraved the sense, obscured the truth, and deceived the ignorant*; that in many places they detort the Scriptures from the right sense; and that they shew themselves to love darkness more than light; falsehood more than truth.—Bishop Tunstal discovered no less than 2000 corruptions in Tindal's New Testament. (See Appendix No. 1.)

nicates it entire; for she not only puts into their hands the books contained in the Protestant Bible, but also the books rejected by the Protestants, under the name of Apocryphal writings. On what reasonable grounds the one part of the Divine Writings has been admitted and the other rejected, I have not been able to find out, since the authenticity of both rests upon the same authority,—that of the Roman Catholick Church. Not only the most ancient Fathers of the Church admitted the Apocryphal writings as the Word of God, and drew arguments from them against the heretics of their time; but also a General Council, held in the early ages of Christianity, and acknowledged by the universal Christian world, declared all and every one of the books now composing the Roman Catholick Bible to be the genuine word of God; and as such were they venerated till the period of the Reformation. It was, however, soon found that these books were opposed to the new doctrines, and so manifestly against the new opinions of the first Reformers, that when pressed with arguments drawn from them, they had no other answer but to deny their authority. I do not however produce these facts by way of recrimination, nor do I suppose that a discussion on the merits of the first Reformers can be regarded by any individual of the present day as a personal attack; I only allege these things with a view of shewing, how ignorant of the transactions of past or present times, or how malicious that man must be, who can knowingly cast such an aspersion on the Catholick Church. This must appear

the more unaccountable, when it is considered that every line, both of the Old and New Testament must stand or fall by her testimony, and that not one iota can be proved to be the Word of God, without having recourse to the Roman Catholick Church, and that, of course, whatever arguments go to shew that the so-called Apocryphal Books are not of divine inspiration, must in the same proportion destroy the authenticity of every book in Scripture, by taking away the foundation on which all must rest,—*the testimony of the Roman Catholick Church*. An awful reflection for such as rely on the *written Word alone* as their guide to happiness on high.

Another favourite topic of pious declamation against the Roman Catholicks, is *ignorance*, and a *blind submission* to their Church, which, according to the Tracts, commands them to *renounce their understanding*, and to bow in profound adoration to her decrees, without laying before them any motives whatever, to induce the judgment to acquiesce. *Bold assertions* flow very easily, and require neither truth, talent, nor learning, and generally pass with the vulgar and ignorant as the strongest arguments; but as for *proofs*, that is an article these Tracts do not deal in. I do not hesitate to say, that if the grounds on which the Catholicks and their opponents proceed in their search after truth, as connected with religion, were impartially weighed, the balance would be in favour of the Catholicks. Let us, by way of elucidation, confine ourselves to the Scriptures.

It is a fundamental principle in the Protestant Churches, that the Scripture *alone* is the *rule of faith*, or the *only guide* by which we can discover the truths revealed by God to man. But allow me to observe, that before the books called Scripture can be admitted as the Word of God, a necessary preliminary must first be agreed on—that is, *by what authority these books are declared to be of divine inspiration*. The books, being a dead letter, cannot prove their own origin. There must, therefore, exist an authority, independently of the books, at whose tribunal not only the existence of Scripture in general, but each individual book, and every part of that book, must be tried. The next question is, whether there be on earth a tribunal of this nature, and whether it be liable to err in its judgment on those points? If there can be no authority on earth *infallible* in her decisions, there exists *no certain and infallible proof* in favour of the Scriptures, and, of course, the faith built upon them has *no foundation* but the *mere opinions of men*. When a teacher, of any denomination of Christians, delivers the Scripture into the hands of his pupils, as the *unerring* word of God, he cannot expect that any reasonable being will accept of it as such upon his mere word. They will naturally inquire where the witnesses are, on whose *infallible* testimony the authority of the book rests; for, it is evident, that as the revelation contained in the book has not been delivered directly from Heaven to the present generation, but was made to the world eighteen centuries ago, there must have

existed an *uninterrupted* series of witnesses, from that time to the present day, *incapable of erring, or leading others into error*. Without this, it *cannot be infallibly proved* that God ever did reveal himself to mankind at all, much less that the Bible contains any revealed truth whatever. It is impossible to discover any other method by which the existence of Scripture, or its divine inspiration, can be proved, and yet it is a fundamental article with Protestants to admit of Scripture as the *infallible* Word of God, and at the same time to reject the *authority of the witnesses* by whose testimony *alone* it can be proved to be the Word of God. From this contradictory principle arose that endless variety of opinions among the first Reformers regarding the books of Scripture, some casting away one book, some another, insomuch that scarce a verse of Scripture but has been rejected by some one or other of the Reformers.*

The Roman Catholick, however, does not allow himself to be led astray by such delusive arguments. His reason informs him that if the book proposed to his acceptance as of divine inspiration be the *undoubted* Word of God, there must have existed a society of men through every age, from the beginning of Christianity to the present moment, attesting the authenticity of the book, and its claim to a divine origin, and that this society must be *infallible* in its testimony regarding the book. His reason leads him a step farther, and shews him, that all mankind being *by nature liable to error*, nothing

* See Appendix, No. 2.

less than the Spirit of God himself immediately directing them, can preserve them from error; that, of course, the doctrine which teaches that the Bible is *infallibly* the Word of God, implies of necessity a society of men, or in other terms, a *Church*, under the particular influence of divine truth; and that, if this principle be not admitted of, the Bible can have *no more claim* to his belief than *any other book*, and may be admitted or rejected without a crime. This incontrovertible truth being once established, his next care is to seek for this society, and examine its claims to infallibility. In the course of the investigation he discovers a society of men spread over the face of the globe, differing in language, in manners, and ideas, separated at an immense distance from each other, all invariably agreeing in one point, viz. in the existence of *an infallible Church*, established by Christ on earth. He then ascends by a regular gradation, from age to age, up to the period of the Apostles, and finding them all linked together by an uniformity of doctrine, and all concurring to form one unbroken chain of evidence, called *tradition*, his reason being no longer able to resist the force of truth, he feels it must be the height of folly to reject a testimony thus visibly guided by the hand of God. He then, and *then only*, submits his reason to the obedience of faith, and with pious submission receives, as the unerring word of God, a book which comes down to him supported by such unquestionable vouchers. This course of argument and investigation has brought the wisest men of

every age to a knowledge of the church of Christ, and from thence to the Scriptures. Among the rest may be cited the great light of the Church, St. Austin, who declared that he would not believe the Scriptures, if the *authority of the Church* did not move him to it.* The Roman Catholick has, moreover, the consolation of finding, when he opens the Scriptures, that they on their part establish and confirm the *unerring authority of the Church*. He there finds the Divine Author of our religion founding *a church on a rock*, which all the powers of hell shall not be able to shake. St. Matt. c. xvi. v. 18, and commanding all, under pain of being ranked with the greatest enemies of God, to hear and obey her: c. xviii. v. 17, 18, investing her pastors with his own authority, and promising to be with her always, even unto the end of the world, c. xxviii. v. 19, 20, and to send them another Comforter, who should abide with them for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, to guide them into *all truth*; St. Luke, c. x. v. 16; St. John, c. xiv, v. 16, 17, and 26; c. xvi. v. 13. The same doctrine he finds continually inculcated by the inspired writers, whom Christ commissioned to teach all nations; Ephes. c. iv v. 11, 12; c. v. v. 23, 24; and 1 Tim. c. iii, v. 14, 15, where the Church is called the *pillar and ground-work of truth*. When the Catholic compares these passages with the glorious promises made by the Prophets of the Old Law to the Church of the

* See Appendix, No. 3.

New Covenant, which even the Protestants apply to the Church of Christ, as may be seen in the observations prefixed to some of the chapters of Isaiah, in the Protestant Bible, as in c. liv. lx. and Psalm xlvi. his reason acknowledges the *hand of God*, and submits itself to *His guidance*. On the one hand he sees a Church, embracing every nation and every age from the foundation of Christianity, shewing by incontrovertible argument her title to a divine origin, and infallibility in her doctrines, which delivers to him the sacred oracles as the undoubted Word of God, on the other hand, he finds in the New Testament the splendid promises of the Old accomplished in every part, and both combining to confirm the authority of the Church, so as to resemble a machine in which every part unites to form one perfect whole. Here the Catholick rests his foot on a foundation which nothing can shake, and, if this be blindness, he glories in the appellation.

Can any one of these, who from the high pinnacle of self-conceit, are accustomed to look down with contempt, and smile on the supposed blindness of the poor *Papists*, boast of any thing more enlightened than this method of investigating truth? Let them try the force of *argument*, but not of *unmeaning ridicule*, with their poor neighbours thus benighted in the darkness of Popery, and I am apt to think they will find it much easier to conjure up a priest, as the Tracts do, according to their own imaginations, to put more foolish arguments into his mouth than into the mouth of

their champion, if that can be possible, and then drive him off the stage, than to encounter an antagonist composed of flesh and blood.

As to ignorance, if it did exist amongst the Catholics of these realms even to the utmost extent, their Protestant fellow-subjects should be the last to reproach them with it. History will inform them that the Catholics have kept alive the dying embers of knowledge and science in the face of poverty, prisons, and the gibbet. Yes, History will display an appalling picture of the cruel ingenuity that has been employed since the period of the Reformation, for the purpose of robbing the Catholics of their property, their learning, and the Religion of their ancestors.* Expelled the seats of learning, founded by their own or their parents' liberality, they were forbidden to learn at the hands of a Catholic the first letters of the alphabet. If they fled from these inhospitable shores to court the Muses, or acquire learning in the land of strangers, their property and friends experienced the utmost severity of the law; if they returned home, punishment awaited them. But if any one of them received the dignity of priesthood, and visited his native soil to administer the comforts of religion, and attend the sick bed of his friends, he was doomed to expiate this crime with the death of felons. The priests, who thus exposed themselves in the exercise of the purest charity, fled from the light of day, concealing themselves in dark recesses formed for that purpose, in the mansions of such Catholics,

as dared expose their own lives by granting them an asylum. Many of these hiding places are extant at the present day.

Among the rest may yet be seen, the hiding place which the Priest Huddleston resigned to King Charles the Second, when pursued by his enemies, and great sums were offered for his detection. In these places they lay hid, till the shades of night allowed them to creep abroad, administering consolation and assistance to such as required them, till the dawn of day bid them retire again to their dark abodes. Thus they passed their sunless days, and thus their dreary nights, in hourly expectation of being discovered by an enemy, or betrayed by a false friend, and delivered into the hands of inexorable judges, and consigned to the death of traitors. Hundreds of them perished martyrs of charity, under the cruel hands of the executioner. The tale of their sufferings would harrow up the soul of the most unfeeling enemy of the Catholick cause, if he would but read them, as they are authentically related in the Book of Missionary Priests.* We need not forgeries to oppose to the false accounts of Fox, in his lying Book of Martyrs; no, the facts alluded to are on record in the public courts, and must overwhelm with shame those who are labouring to kindle anew the dying fire of hatred and persecution. It were better that

* Memoirs of Missionary Priests, and other Catholicks, of both sexes, that have suffered death in England on religious accounts, from the year 1577 to 1684. By Bishop Challoner.

every past transaction, calculated to keep up a spirit of acrimony among Christians, were allowed to be buried in oblivion. Nothing but the just law of self-defence could induce us to bring forward facts of this nature; but such have been the measures resorted to and such the laws enacted for the purpose of depriving the Catholicks of every tincture of learning, and of turning the whole balance in favor of their enemies, that a stranger acquainted only with these laws, and the cruel activity with which they have been executed, would be induced to conclude, that if these causes have produced their natural effects, the Catholicks of Great Britain must be debased to the lowest degree of ignorance, whilst the other portion of its inhabitants are distinguished in every branch of learning; and that, if one spark of knowledge be left unextinguished in the Catholick Body, it must be owing to a kind of miraculous interposition of Divine Providence in their favor. The Catholicks, however, relying on Him who promised to steer their bark, have stemmed the torrent and braved the storm. Aliens from their native home, they wandered through Europe in search of learning, and enriched with its stores, returned at the risk of their lives, to communicate its blessings to their suffering brethren: thus has the torch of science been kept alive amongst them, and thus have they proved themselves equal to any of their opponents in the career of literary fame, and to this day are not afraid of entering the lists with the most learned of their neighbours. It may, however, perhaps

be said, this may be all well enough as far as it regards profane learning; but the ignorance and stupidity charged on Catholics regard the follies of their religious creed; aye, there is the rub. I wish, however, the persons who thus accuse us, would only please to make themselves acquainted with our doctrine before they condemn it. Fielding, the favorite writer of Somersetshire, employs a whole chapter to shew that a man will probably write, and speak more reasonably on a subject, which he has studied, than on one of which he is totally ignorant. This chapter I should particularly recommend to the perusal of those, who pass sentence with such assurance on the errors of Popery. They might perhaps, be prevailed on to get some little knowledge of our principles, and try the force of argument with some of the poor ignorant Papists, in order to convince themselves that they are actually as void of common understanding as they are represented to be. They would, however, soon find that our smallest Catechisms, which are put into the hands of children, as soon as their minds are capable of receiving the least tincture of religion, contain as pure and complete a system of morality founded on the Word of God, as will be found in all the books of our adversaries put together. Our children are taught to love and adore their God, as their first beginning and last end, and to love with unfeigned charity all mankind, even those that revile and slander them, for his sake.— There is no denomination of Christians which uses so many, or more inspiring forms of

prayer.—which has produced so many works of piety, and of gospel-morality; there is no people on earth more devoted to their perusal than Catholicks, insomuch that I think myself justified in saying, that there is as great a variety of good books in this single small congregation, as in any of the congregations of the County of Somerset, that profess not the Catholick Faith. Have not many of the Sects published books written by Catholick Authors, after having carefully cut away whatever does not go down with them? Is this not the case with the Imitation of Christ? Can all their learned and pious men produce a purer or more evangelical doctrine,—a sincerer love, and more humble adoration of our Redeemer, than is found in that single book? Let them read that, and then, if their conscience will permit it, charge us with ignorance, and with denying Christ. There is no society of Christians which lays such severe injunctions on the Teachers to read and explain the Scripture to the people, and to inculcate on their minds their duties as Men and Christians; nor is there any society in which the pastors are more unremittingly assiduous in instructing their flocks, from the first dawn of reason, till it be extinguished in death, in every branch of their obligations, than in the Roman Catholick Church. I can venture to say, notwithstanding the bold and repeated charge against the priests of our Church, of keeping the people in ignorance, that our children of ten or eleven years of age, shall, in case of trial, give as reasonable and distinct an account

of the faith that is in them, and explain as clearly the duties they owe to God and their neighbour, as, not to say children of their own age, but even many of those who consider themselves teachers in Israel.

But then, Ireland cannot be included in the list, for there, if we credit the Tracts, ignorance reigns uncontrolled; bigotry and blind superstition, a slavish subjection even of the understanding, to the despotic sway of their priests, overshadow poor Ireland with an universal darkness, impenetrable even to the bright and glorious light, now emanating from the Bible Societies. These pious effusions may be addressed to the prejudices of the vulgar and ignorant, who have it not in their power to examine the truth of them, but the man of honor and knowledge must consider his understanding insulted by being supposed foolish enough to swallow down such absurdities. It is well known from history that, for many ages after its conversion to Christianity, Ireland shone like a bright constellation on the horizon of literature; that the nations of Europe resorted to her happy shores, to drink at the fountain of science, and that from them, our rude forefathers received the very letters of their Alphabet. Nothing but oppression's iron yoke, could damp the spirits of Ireland's *ardent* sons; but, to subdue it was not in the power of man. For, though powerful cruelty exhausted every art to quench their native flame, yet, like Atlas, who is said to bear the world, their buoyant genius made them rise again unconquered under their heavy bur-

dens. If, after ages of desolation, in which the Catholicks have to weep over the loss of their temporal and ecclesiastical property,—their churches conveyed into the power of their enemies,—themselves and their pastors left destitute to struggle with every form of misery;—if, when the number of their teachers is thus diminished by oppression, there do exist ignorance, which the zeal of a pastor, who has his thousands to instruct, cannot remove; and if his voice cannot be heard, like that on Mount Sinai, to the extremities of the desert, and imprint on every heart of his widely dispersed flock the strict observance of the commandments of God and his Church,—let not this be charged on the religion, nor on the pastors, whose days and nights are one succession of toils, but on their cruel oppressors.* Admitting, however, all this, the accusation with which the writings of our adversaries teem against Ireland, are unfounded. Travellers who have visited the interior of Ireland, inform us that among the bogs and rude mountains, scarce accessible to any foot but that of the Harpies that devour the bread watered by the tears of the husbandman, and the foot of the minister of peace, who comes to sooth the sorrows of his flock, may be found young people cloathed in rags and fed with potatoes, who can understand the languages of Greece and Rome, and admire their poets and orators. (See Dr. Milner's Letters from Ireland.) Let those who expatiate with so much self-complacency on the

* See Appendix No. 5.

ignorance of the Irish Catholics, peruse the books that are daily flowing from their pens, let them listen to the animated and dignified discourses delivered from the pulpits, which the first orators of Christianity, would not be ashamed of, let them attend the bar, where they will find innocence and justice defended by Catholick orators with an energy and eloquence not unworthy a Demosthenes or Cicero: let them visit the Catholick College of Maynooth, and see whether ignorance lingers there.* They will there find men, who in point of learning and elegance of diction yield not the palm to any of their Protestant neighbours. Allow the Catholics the free disposal of their own property, either in pious or literary establishments for the instruction of their fellow Catholics, which the law as yet forbids; remove from them the disgraceful fetters that cramp the ardent spirits of the Irish Catholics, and we shall once more see them raise their heads and be the foremost in every literary pursuit, and Ireland will once more smile like the evening star down the western ocean.

Yet notwithstanding all that has been said by the friends of truth, the cry of Irish ignorance and darkness is still renewed by these Tracts, and the guilt of propagating blindness amongst the people is charged upon the poor priests, who no doubt are every where the enemies of illumination. One chief means the Tracts tell us, by which they

* The names of Arthur O'Leary, Hierophilos and O'Connel are too well known to need mentioning here.

effect their purpose, is by keeping every leaf of the Bible from the people. There seems, it is true, to be an inexhaustible fund of darkness in Ireland, more portable than gas, if we may be allowed to judge by the vast quantity daily drawn off, and diffused over England, through the medium of the Tracts. It is however to be hoped that if this pious work of exportation be duly persevered in, this *darkness visible* will by degrees be reduced to a kind of twilight. But it must appear to every candid mind both illiberal and unjust to charge the priests with exercising an undue influence over the minds of their flocks, or concealing the truths of the gospel from them. Protestant authors, well acquainted with the state of Ireland, and honest enough to avow their real sentiments, have acknowledged the priests to have been at all times the guardians of peace, order and morality. (See Appendix No. 6.) To them have the people looked up in every distress, as their only support on earth, round them have they clung in every danger; and when they have writhed under the tyrant's lash, and their generous hearts have been ready to burst with a deep-felt sense of the wrongs they endured, then has the voice of the priests calmed their passions into peace, bidding them look on the crucifix and remember the lessons and example of their Redeemer. This ascendancy of the Priests has been a blessing both to England and Ireland, in thus preventing Ireland from exhibiting one scene of blood from shore to shore. The conduct pursued by Arthur O'Leary, in conjunction with

the bishops and other clergy, in appeasing the troubles that distracted Ireland some years ago, is a striking confirmation of this truth. Let but the priesthood of Ireland, for a moment forget their duty to God and their King, and with one voice sound the trumpet of revolt: with what ardor would Erin's brave sons fly to arms, rush into the cannon's mouth, and glory in dying at the feet of their priests! But no! their kingdom is not of this world, their allegiance is founded on a higher motive than human hopes or fears; they have learnt to obey for conscience sake, and as long as their flocks revere the lessons they give them, so long will every attempt to shake their fidelity to their sovereign be fruitless. But, should this attachment be dissolved, and the people taught to interpret the scripture according to their own disordered fancy and criminal wishes, and some artful traitor persuade them to shake off the Egyptian yoke and rally round the standard of the new Moses, what effects might be produced we may learn from the history of the canting Cromwell and his fanatical Puritans.

As to the charge brought against the priests of secreting the word of God from the people for the purpose of retaining their authority over them, nothing can be more illiberal and unjust than such an accusation, which the following statement taken from a pamphlet addressed a few weeks ago to the Marquis of Wellesly will refute, where page 69 we find:—"In this kingdom no particular permission is necessary, or is ever required by any Roman Catholick for reading the word

of God in an approved translation; and the several editions through which the Douay Bible has passed in England and Ireland is the best possible proof, that encompassed as we are by innumerable sects; beset as we are in the streets, in the fields, in the high-ways, in the stage coaches, in public society and private company with male and female, young and old gospel disputants, yet that we are not,—cannot be induced to relinquish the reading and study of the word of God, nor abjure our faith. The editions of the Douay Bible in the city of Dublin, since the period when Catholics were allowed to breathe, have been numerous. Besides those by O'Reilly and Cross, Mr. Cayne published an edition in 1808, a second in 1816, and is at present engaged in preparing with the *sanction and under the patronage of the Catholic Pre-late* a cheap stereotype edition for the purpose of promoting the more effectually the diffusion of the word of God."

This fact must have been totally unknown to the gentleman, who came down some months ago from the Parent Bible Society with such important communications to the Bible Society of this Town, or he would certainly have dispensed with the pathetic and elaborate declamation with which he entertained the company, on the millions of poor Irish, that had *not a leaf of the bible*. He however, like many others, who speak as positively as himself, seems never to have been in Ireland, nor to have thought it worth his while to ascertain whether his assertions were correct or not: this indeed would have

been too tedious a way of proceeding: his object was to get money, and this object he knew he could more easily attain by pompous heart-rending figures of speech, than by a plain statement of undoubted truths.

It is reported that some charitable ladies in this town are engaged in working various articles, with the intention of selling them in spring, and disposing of the money in bibles for the ignorant Irish; but these ladies may rest assured that the Irish are so well supplied with bibles, that the pious donation will be no favour whatever. If however they wish to secure the gratitude of a generous-hearted nation, they need only convert the money into potatoes to alleviate in some degree the misery and want caused by the tithe proctors and middle men.

Whoever wishes to be acquainted with the wretched state to which Ireland has been reduced by cruel oppression, and with the method the best calculated to remove that wretchedness, will find ample satisfaction in the late report made by the Committee of the House of Commons on the improvement of Ireland, in which the much injured character of the Irish peasantry is displayed in colours that do honor to human nature. If people would but sincerely seek the truth, and not be the willing dupes of every idle tale, their prejudices in regard of both English and Irish Catholicicks would soon be dispersed.

I must apologize for having occupied your attention on a subject, which perhaps may have but little interest in your eyes; being however convinced, from my own knowledge

of your character, that you will with pleasure exert your influence, which is extensive, towards the dissipation of error, and the removal of injustice: and considering that you might not be acquainted with many of the facts regarding the Catholics, I thought it necessary to lay them before you, with the view of shewing you, that the grievances we so justly complain of are many, and that the Catholick cause, though attacked by so many enemies, is not so bad, but that it can rest upon its own merits; not so hopeless, but that it may find advocates, able and willing to defend it. I wish also to shew with how much reason is it that the Catholics, who wish to live in perfect concord with all the world, must deprecate the circulating of Tracts tending to perpetuate the causes of their sufferings, and to keep alive a spirit of hatred and unmerited persecution. We require *no indulgence*; it is *justice* we call for. If we transgress, we wish not to be screened from punishment; but if we are guilty of no crime, we hope not to be treated as criminals. In this work of charity and justice I am sure you will concur. But if neither your efforts, nor those of the other gentlemen, can prevent our religion and our persons from being exposed to the insults of ignorant or malevolent fanaticism, no one can be surprised if we employ in our defence every weapon, which religion and justice put into our hands; we desire nothing but peace and the quiet enjoyment of our own tenets, which injure no man. But if we are dragged into the combat, we shall not shrink from the engagement. Our religious creed will bear the severest investiga-

tion, and its Ministers, when called upon for its defence, daily shew the world, that they have not consumed their years and their health in pursuit of learning to no purpose. The law no longer makes it criminal to assert our innocence; nor are our arguments answered by the prison and the halter. A spirit of toleration and christian charity is pervading every class of society, and though some few fiery zealots, like the present re-publishers of Fox's calumnies, may wish to retard its progress, yet the day of general good will is approaching, and every attempt to delay the lingering demon of bigotry will only recoil with tenfold weight on the authors of the ungodly undertaking.

It should be laid down as a principle by all denominations of christians, that, whatever difference of creeds may exist among them, universal charity should be the point in which all ought to agree; that, however they may vary in their manner of adoring God, this should not prevent them from embracing each other as brothers. In this we cannot err; let charity be our guide, and we shall soon find truth.

These are the sincere wishes of my heart, and were I not convinced that your feelings are responsive to mine, I should not have trespassed so long on your patience; I am under no apprehension as to the reception this tedious and desultory letter will meet with from your liberal disposition, but am fully sensible, that whatever effect may be produced on others, your kind efforts will not be wanting towards introducing that concord amongst

mankind, which constitutes the greatest happiness of men here, and will form a great ingredient of happiness hereafter.

If any thing has escaped my pen, that may seem to betray animosity, I am not sensible of it, but shall be glad to mollify any expression that may be too harsh; it must at the same time however be considered, that when the sense of injuries is deeply felt, the language expressive of them is apt to be warm, without being intended to hurt the feelings of any individual, which, I assure you, is most foreign from my wishes or thoughts, With this assurance, I have the honor to subscribe myself,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

RICHARD TOWERS.

APPENDIX.



No. 1.

In a work published last year entitled, a Second Series of Curiosities of Literature, by J. D. Israeli, Esq. who is no Roman Catholick, it is related amongst many observations on this subject, that the English Bibles were for some time suffered to be so corrupted, that no books ever yet swarmed with such innumerable errors; these errors unquestionably were in great part voluntary commissions, interpolated passages, and meanings forged for certain purposes; sometimes to sanction the new Creed of some half-hatched sect, and sometimes with an intention to destroy all scriptural authority by a confusion or commission of texts. He relates also that the learned Usher hastening one day to preach at St. Paul's Cross, entered the shop of one of the Stationers, and enquiring for a Bible of the London edition, when he came to look for his text, to his astonishment and horror discovered that the verse was omitted in the Bible. This gave the first occasion of complaint to the King of the insufferable neglect and incapacity of the London press.—During the civil wars there was a general competition amongst the printers who should print the cheapest; many thousands of English Bibles were printed in Holland in duodecimo, of which twelve thousand with notes fabricated in Holland, usually by our fugitive sectarians, were seized by the King's printers as contrary to the statute. A large impression of English Bibles printed in Holland was burnt by order of the assembly of divines for these errors. Ruth iv. 13. the Lord gave her *corruption* (instead of *conception*.)—St. Luke xxi. 28. look up and lift up your heads for your *condemnation* (instead of *redemption*) is at hand. These errors were none of the printer's, but as a writer of the times expresses it egregious blasphemies and damnable errors of some sectarian.

In the year 1653 appeared the pearl Bible by Field, so called from its small size, being in twenty-fours, containing

many notable errors, amongst the rest the following. *Romans* ii. 13 v. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of *righteousness unto sin*" (instead of *unrighteousness*,) *First Corinthians* ii. 9 v. "Know ye not that the unrighteous *shall inherit* (instead of *shall not inherit*) the kingdom of God."

This erratum served as the foundation of a dangerous doctrine; for many libertines urged the text from this corrupt Bible against the reproofs of a divine.

This Field was a great forger; and it is said that he received £1500. from the Independents, to corrupt a text in *Acts* ii. 3, to sanction the right of the people to appoint their own Pastors, which corruption was the easiest possible, by putting *ye* instead of *we*, making the Apostles say, "wherefore brethren look ye out among you seven men of good reputation full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom *ye* (instead of *we*) may appoint over this business." The only account I recollect of this extraordinary state of our Bibles, is a happy allusion in a line of Butler, (the author of *Hudibras*.)

Religion spawned a various rout
Of petulant capricious sects
The maggots of corrupted texts.

In other Bibles by Hills and Field we find such abundant errata reducing the texts to nonsense or to blasphemy, making the scriptures contemptible to the multitudes, who came to pray and not scorn.

It is affirmed, in the manuscript account already referred to that our Bible swarmed with *six thousand faults* indeed from another source we discover that Sterne a solid scholar was the first that summed up 3600 faults that were in our printed Bibles of London.

These pocket Bibles the sectarians of the day were very vain of having neatly bound with gilt leaves; these they were perpetually opening and appealing to with the utmost self-sufficiency and perfect ignorance of the original; the learned Selden used to amuse himself with going to the assembly of their divines and puzzling them in their own learning. On one occasion, there arose a discussion amongst these wise divines concerning the distance between Jerusalem and Jericho (which one would suppose they ought to have known from the private spirit,) one said it was 20 miles, another 10, and at last it was concluded to be only 7, for this strange reason; that Fish was brought from Jericho to Jerusalem market. But on Selden observing that the fish in question was perhaps salted, these acute disputants were perfectly disconcerted.

Thus far the above said Protestant author. It is however worthy of observation that these were the heroes who undertook to correct the abuses and purge away the corruptions of the Roman Catholick Church.

Such is the character of our English translations; as to the translations made by the foreign reformers, we may appeal to their testimony of each other.

Luther's translation is condemned by Zuinglius; who writes thus to Luther; "Thou corruptest the word of God (O Luther!) thou art seen to be a manifest and common corrupter and perverter of the Holy Scriptures; how much are we ashamed of thee, who have hitherto esteemed thee beyond all measure, and prove thee to be such a man." (T: 2. ad. Luth. lib. des.) His corruption of the Epistle to the Romans c. iii. v. 28, by adding the word "*alone*," to irritate the Papists, is well known; where he makes the text say, "We account a man to be justified by faith *alone* (which word is not in the original) without the works of the law. When reproached with it, he only replied, "So I will, so *I command*, let my will serve instead of a reason; I am grieved I did not add without *all* works of *all* laws." Luther thought every law but his own will rather troublesome, and was much fonder of good cheer than good works; and he thought, by *discarding good works*, he should displease the Papists who taught according to Scripture, that *faith without good works is dead*.

Luther, in his turn, condemns the Zuinglian translation, calling the translators fools, asses, antichrists, deceivers, &c. who, to support the figurative presence of Christ in the blessed Sacrament, change the words of our Saviour, "*this is my body*," into "*this signifies my body*."

Beza condemns the translation made by the divines of Basil as being in many places wicked, and altogether differing from the mind of the Holy Ghost; as likewise that of Castalio, as sacrilegious, wicked, and ethnical. As to Calvin's translation, Molinæus, a learned Protestant, affirms that Calvin, in his 'Harmony,' makes the text of the Gospel leap up and down; he uses violence to the letter of the Gospel, and adds to the text. And of Beza (whose translation our English chiefly follow) he says, that he actually *changes the text*.—Castalio, a learned Calvinist, says further, "I will not note all his errors, for that would require too large a volume."

Many more examples of this nature may be seen in the Errata of the Bible, written by Ward.

No .2.

Luther rejects Moses and the Ten Commandments. "*We will neither hear nor see Moyses*, for he was given only to the Jews. I say I will not receive Moses with his law, for

he is the enemy of Christ. Moses is the master of all hangmen. The Ten Commandments belong not to Christians. Let the Ten Commandments be altogether rejected, and all heresy will presently cease; for the Ten Commandments are, as it were, the fountain from whence all heresies spring."—See Ward's Errata, page 35.

Luther had his own good reasons for declaring war against the Ten Commandments!

Islebius, the scholar of Luther, said that the Decalogue was not to be taught in the Church; and from him came the sect of *Antinomians* (enemies of the Law) who taught that the *Law of God is not worthy to be called the Word of God*; that if a man be *drowned in sin*, he is in the midst of happiness, *provide he believe*; that all that busy themselves about Moyses, that is, the Ten Commandments, belong to the devil, to the gallows, with Moyses.—Ward's Errata, page 36.

Martin Luther calls the book of Job the argument of a fable. Castalio commanded the Canticles to be put out of the Canon.

Pomerane, a great evangelist among the Lutherans, ordered the Epistle of St. James, which Luther calls an Epistle of straw, to be left out, because it *recommends good works*.

Vitus Theodorus, a Protestant preacher of Nuremburg, writes thus:—"We have left out the Epistle of St. James and the Revelations of John, of set purpose, because the Epistle of James too much advances works against faith."

The Centurists of Magdeburg reject St. James for the same reason.

Nothing annoyed the Reformers so much as the doctrine, that a holy life was necessary for salvation.

Zuinglius, and other Protestants, affirm that *all things are not sacred in St. Paul's Epistles*, and that in sundry things *he erred*.

Mr. Rogers, the great labourer to our English Convocation men, names several of his Protestant brethren, who rejected the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, of St. James, the first and second of St. John, of Jude, and the Apocalypse.—Ward's Errata, page 36.

Thus has every part of Scripture been cast out by some or other of the Reformers; but how are the common people to discern the genuine Word of God, when the doctors themselves disagree? What a contrast does not the unanimity prevailing throughout the whole Catholick Church present, when compared with this jargon of impiety?

No. 3.

Amongst the moderns who have returned to the bosom of the Roman Catholick Church, from a conviction of its truth, may be mentioned the Lutheran Duke of Brunswick, Anton

Ulrick, who has beautifully explained his motives in a small book, entitled *The Duke of Brunswick's Fifty Reasons*; a book well worth the perusal of every one who is in search of truth. As also, the seventy-two thousand Calvinists converted, by St. Francis of Sales, as may be seen in his life, written by Marsollier and by others, and translated by the Rev. Dr. Coombes. Here we may also add, King Charles the Second, who, during the time he was under the protection of the Priest Huddleston, had read a small controversial treatise, written by the Rev. Mr. Huddleston, the uncle of the one just mentioned, which made such impression on his mind, that though he found it convenient to live a Protestant, he thought it safest to die a Roman Catholick. He received on his death-bed the rites of the Catholick Church, at the hands of the same Priest Huddleston that had saved his life. To these may be added many persons of the first rank in France, converted by Bossuet, and many remarkable conversions of later date, related in a small work, called a *Narrative of Remarkable Conversions*. We may also appeal to the names of princes, and men distinguished by birth and learning, who are daily joining the Roman Catholick Church; as, one of the sons of the Duke of Mecklenburg Schwerin, and a reigning prince of the house of Saxony; the learned Haller; and the Protestant Minister, Thayer, who are *real living characters*. The accounts of these, and innumerable other conversions, are before the public, and of course subject to the strictest scrutiny; they contain a plain statement of public facts, without any vague invectives or false accusations against the professors of other religious creeds. How different from this method is that pursued in the Tracts! The authors of them being sensible that nothing can be such a triumph to their cause as the gaining over of one Roman Catholick; but not being able to produce authenticated examples of this nature, they have recourse to the paltry subterfuge of inventing them, and to make them palatable to the ignorant and bigotted part of their readers interlard them with the most scurrilous abuse of the Roman Catholics. No. 4.

An enumeration of some of the penal laws enacted, against English Catholics, will shew what refinement of cruelty has been used to make them violate their conscience, in denying their faith.

According to laws made in the years 1, 23, 27, 29, 35, of Elizabeth—2, 3, 4, 5, 7, of James the First—3, 25, of Charles the Second—and 1 of George the First, an English Catholick Priest, returning to England from beyond the seas, and not conforming to the Protestant Church within three days, is guilty of *high treason*,

Any person who returns to the Catholick faith, or procures others to return to it, is guilty of *high treason*.

If Catholicks educated their children at home, and employed a schoolmaster who did not repair to church, or who was not approved of by the Bishop of the Diocese, they were to forfeit £10 a month, and the schoolmaster 40s. a day; if they sent their children to Catholick foreign schools, they forfeited £100, and the children so sent were disabled from inheriting, purchasing, or enjoying any lands, profits, goods, debts, duties, legacies, or sums of money. Saying mass was punishable by a forfeiture of 200 marks; hearing it, with 100.

A Catholick absenting himself from the Protestant Church was punished with a fine of £20 per month; was subject to the penalties annexed to excommunication; was disabled from holding any office; from keeping arms in his house; from maintaining actions or suits at law; from being executor or guardian; from presenting to advowsons; from practising in law or physic; was forbidden to travel five miles from home without license, upon pain of forfeiting *all his goods*; was not allowed to come to Court, under a penalty of £100. It must be observed that money was of much greater value at that time than at the present day.

A married woman thus absenting herself, forfeited two thirds of her dower or jointure; could not be executrix or administratrix to her husband, and during her marriage might be kept in prison, unless redeemed by her husband with £10. a month, or a third part of his lands. Catholick recusants (that is, who refuse to go to church) three months after conviction, if required by four justices of the peace, were obliged to renounce their religion, or abjure the realm, and bid farewell for ever to their friends and home, and if they returned without license, were to suffer death as *felons*.

These penalties were incurred not only by refusing to be present at the Protestant Church, but by refusing to take the oath of *Supremacy*, which implies a solemn abjuration of the *Catholick Religion*; this oath might be tendered by any two justices of peace, without any previous information or complaint by any other person; by this means a Catholick who had attained the age of sixteen, and who did not in six months after take this oath, was rendered incapable of possessing lands under any form whatever, which during his recusancy came into the hands of the next Protestant heir, who was not obliged to account for any of the profits; he was incapable of purchasing; and all estates, terms, interests, or profits out of lands made, done, or suffered, to his use, or in trust for him, were made void.

Catholicks being of the age of 13 years, and not having taken this oath, were subject to a double land tax.

The other laws excluding Catholicks from every office, even the most trivial, until they perjured themselves by taking oaths, contrary to their own conviction, against transubstantiation and Popery, are known to every one.

No. 5.

The penal laws enacted against English Catholicks were merciful, when compared with the laws framed against the Irish Catholicks. The English Catholicks have indeed reason to complain, that every principle of justice has been violated in their regard, but the Irish penal laws are moreover aggravated with this circumstance, that they have been made in open defiance of a most solemn treaty, entered into by King William with the Irish Catholicks, when they were able to have contended the possession of Ireland with him, and have perhaps expelled him the country. This is called the treaty of Limerick, because the city of Limerick was surrendered to William in consequence of the treaty securing to the Irish Catholicks the undisturbed exercise of their religion, with a solemn promise on the part of William, to *procure the said Roman Catholicks such further security in that particular, as may preserve them from any disturbance upon the account of their said religion.* (Treaty of Limerick, Art. 1.) Yet, notwithstanding the great concessions which the Catholicks on their part made by their submission, and the great advantages which the English nation on the other hand acquired by it, twelve years only elapsed before the Catholicks were deprived of every right and privilege which was solemnly guaranteed to them by that treaty. The friends of Orangeism do not seem to be aware that, whilst they are celebrating William's triumph, they are perpetuating the memory of an infamy which it would be their interest to bury in eternal oblivion. To enumerate all the cruel laws enacted against that ill-fated country, would require a volume. Such as are desirous of information on this head, may meet with it in a work of superior merit, written by a *Protestant*, entitled *a History of the Penal Laws against the Irish Catholicks, from the Treaty of Limerick to the Union.* By Henry Parnell, Esq. M. P. In this work, the reader will find an account of laws the most cruel and unnatural that ever disgraced the code of a tyrant: laws that have gone on increasing in severity through every reign, from the disgraceful violation of the treaty of Limerick, by William, till the year 1785, in which the last penal law was enacted, when human invention being exhausted, and the plan of extermination having miscarried, and the French were threatening an invasion, their virulence began by degrees to

abate. In this work is found a detail of sufferings endured by an innocent people, unequalled in the history of human calamity, and endured with a patience which nothing but a deep-felt sense of *true religion*, and a due *submission to their pastors*, did or could inspire.

Penal laws, similar to those above mentioned, against English Catholics, formed a part of the Irish code, besides many others of a more severe and unnatural tendency. Two acts were passed under Queen Anne, which were termed by Mr. Burke, the *ferocious acts of Anne*, by which, among other provisions it was enacted,—That a Catholic father, if any one of his sons becomes a Protestant, shall not sell, mortgage, or dispose, or leave legacies or portions out of his estate, by whatever title he may hold it.

That a Catholic father cannot, under penalty of five hundred pounds, be guardian to, or have the custody of his own children; but if the child, though *ever so young*, *pretends* to be a Protestant, it is taken from *its own father*, and placed with a Protestant relation.

That no Protestant having an estate in Ireland, shall marry with a Catholic, in or out of Ireland.

No Catholic can purchase any manors, &c. or take a lease for any term exceeding 31 years; moreover, if a farm thus taken produce more than one third of the amount of the rent, the first *Protestant who discovers the rate of profit*, may dispossess the Catholic, and enter on the lease himself.

If a Protestant dies possessed of any kind of property whatsoever, which should be seized in fee-simple, or in fee-tail, and which ought to have descended to his son, or other issue in tail, being Catholics, the property is given to the nearest Protestant relation, as if the Catholic heirs were dead.

The estate of a Catholic, for want of a Protestant heir, is divided, share and share alike, among all the Catholic heirs. This was enacted with an intention of extinguishing by degrees every opulent Catholic family in Ireland.

If the child of a Catholic becomes Protestant, the High Court of Chancery is to oblige the parent to declare on oath the full value of his or her property, as well personal as real, and to make such distribution of the property to and among such Protestant child or children as the Court may judge fit. Similar inducements are held out to Catholic wives to become Protestants, by granting them a proportion out of the chattels of the Catholic husband, notwithstanding any will or voluntary disposition. A Catholic, teaching school publicly or privately, or as usher to a Protestant, shall be prosecuted as a Popish regular convict.

Any priest conforming to the Church shall receive thirty pounds per annum.

By these Acts a reward is offered for the discovery of Catholick clergy—fifty pounds for discovering an archbishop, bishop, or vicar-general—twenty pounds for discovering a regular clergyman, or secular clergyman not registered—ten pounds for discovering a Catholick schoolmaster or usher.

By the 21st clause of the second Act, two Justices of the Peace might condemn every Catholick of eighteen years of age, who refused to declare where and when he heard mass, who were present, or the residence of any priest or schoolmaster, to twelve months' imprisonment, or till he paid twenty pounds. Every trust undertaken in favour of a Catholick was forbidden by law, and every Protestant was enabled to file a bill in Chancery against any person concerned in any sale, lease, mortgage, or incumbrance, in trust for Catholics, and to compel him to declare the same. What adds to the injustice of the whole is, that all issues to be tried in any action founded upon this Act shall be tried by none but known Protestants, viz. the declared enemies of the Catholics.

Under George I. several Acts were passed against Catholics; among many other oppressive regulations it was enacted, that the horses of Catholics might be seized for the militia, and that they should pay double towards the militia. They were forbidden to be high or petty constables.—During the reign of George II. almost every year added to the severity of the penal laws. By 9 Geo. II. c. 6. sec. 5. "Persons robbed by privateers, during a war with a Catholick Prince, were to be reimbursed by a levy made on the goods and lands of *Catholicks only*, though they themselves or children were shedding their blood in fighting against that Prince!"

The 19th Geo. II. annuls all marriages between Protestants and Catholics. By 23 Geo. II. every priest celebrating a marriage contrary to 12 Geo. I. *is condemned to be hanged*.

In the 21st and 22d Geo. III. an Act was passed, by the 31 clause of which all statutes made in England, or Great Britain, which relate to the taking of oaths or subscribing any declaration in Ireland, or to any penalty for omitting the same, shall be accepted, used, and executed in Ireland.—Thus, by one stroke of the pen, the whole weight of the English penal code, as connected with oaths, was added to the enormous burden of the Irish nation, and the Catholics were thus excluded by law from sitting in the Irish Parliament, which, till then, no law had prohibited. This is only a slight sketch of the penal statutes under which the Catholics of Ireland so long and so patiently languished—"statutes," as Mr. Parnell says, p. 64, "unexampled for their inhumanity, their unwarrantableness, and their impolicy: which were adopted to exterminate a race of men, already crushed and broken by the longest series of calamities which one nation

had ever the opportunity of inflicting upon one another. They were framed against Christians, under the pretence of securing religion; they were the work of Protestants, than whom no sect has ever cried out more loudly against persecution when Protestants were the martyrs; they were sanctioned by a nation who owed its liberties, and by monarchs who owed their thrones, to a solemn covenantancy that such penal disabilities should never exist. "If it is asked," says the same Protestant author, p. 72, why the people of Ireland are so illiterate? the answer that presents itself is, "Look to the penal laws, that, till a late period, deprived them of education. If it is asked, why they are poor—why the lower orders eat vegetables only, and live in hovels—why there is no such yeomanry in Ireland as in England; still the same answer is given,—look to the penal laws."

A consideration of these facts may serve to impress on the minds of English Protestants a truth little attended to—that, whilst they are stretching out their hands to the relief of the poor of Ireland, they are exercising not only a generous act of charity, but also of atonement for the cruelty and injustice of their forefathers. The reflection would arise in their minds that the poor forlorn object of compassion, who, trembling with cold and hunger applies at their doors for the scraps of their tables, would perhaps at that moment be enjoying the splendours and luxuries of life, if he had not been stripped of all by the deeds of their ancestors; and this reflection would procure for the miserable beings, who so frequently crave relief, a milder treatment than what they frequently experience in England. No. 6.

Judge Fletcher, in his charge to the Grand Jury of the county of Wexford, on the 5th of August, 1814, makes the following observations:— "There has existed an *ancient connexion, salutary in its nature*, between the Catholick pastor and his flock. This connexion has been very often, with *very little reflection*, inveighed against by those who *call themselves friends to the Constitution*, in Church and State. I have had judicial opportunities of knowing that this connexion has been, in some instances weakened and destroyed; the flock *goaded by their wants*, and flying in the face of *their pastor*, with a lamentable abandonment of all religious feeling, with a dereliction of all regard to that *pastoral superintendance*, which is *so essential to the tranquillity of the country*. For, if men have no prospect here but of a continued series of want, and labor, and privation; and if the hopes and fears of a future state are withdrawn from them, by an utter separation from their own pastors, what must be the state of society? *The ties of religion and morality being thus loosened, a frightful state of thing has ensued.*"

